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Remarks

Claims 1-5, 7-14, and 21-30 are pending in this application. Claims 9-12 and 30 are withdrawn. Reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested.

Election/Restriction Requirement

Applicants confirm the election to prosecute the invention identified as group 1, claims 1-5, 7-8, 13-14, and 21-29.

Claim Objections

Applicants disagree with the examiner's claim objections to claims 1, 13, and 21. As indicated in MPEP section 2173.02, claims are not to be analyzed in a vacuum, but in light of: "The claim interpretation that would be given by *one possessing the ordinary level of skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made.*" So, "the examiner must consider the claim as a whole to determine whether the claim apprises *one of ordinary skill in the art* of its scope."

Applicants believe the "flooding operation" language; "first net," "second net," and "third net" language; and "determining a property of the interconnect route path" and "a design rule" is sufficiently definite and meaningful for someone of skill in the art. Electronic design automation for integrated circuits is a highly specialized area. Terms of art have developed to describe many concepts in this field. Attempting to use additional or substitute lay words would only cause less clarity and less precision, and more confusion and uncertainty. The words the examiner identified as being objectionable are within this "terms of the art" language class. Someone of skill in the art will fully comprehend the claims as written.

Therefore, the rejection should be withdrawn.

Section 102 and 103 Rejections

Claims 1-5, 7-8, and 21-22 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable by "A Current Driven Routing and Verification Methodology for Analog Applications" (Adler) in view of U.S. patent 7,168,041 (Durrill). Claims 13-14 were rejected as being unpatentable by Adler. Claims 24-29 were rejected as being unpatentable by Adler in view of U.S. patent 6,543,041 (Scheffer). However, these cited references do not show or suggest the invention as recited.

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Because of the claim objections (see above), the examiner has not interpreted the claims as one of ordinary skill in the art. Rather it appears the examiner has ignored express language in the claims including the "flooding operation" language; "first net," "second net," and "third net" language; and "determining a property of the interconnect route path" and "a design rule" language. So, the examiner rejects the claims, "as best understood," by ignoring language one or skill in the art would immediately recognize as clearly distinguishing the claim over the cited references.

Applicants have explained in detail in the appeal brief filed February 29, 2008 the distinctions (e.g., "shape-based automatic router tool" and "flood operations"). The same distinctions discussed there also apply here. The cited art simply is absent any of such features recited in the claims. Adler, Durrill, Scheffer, considered individually or in combination, simply do not have the recited features (e.g., "shape-based automatic router tool" and "flood operations"). The examiner's rejections are wholly without any technical merit.

Therefore, the rejections should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

Conclusion

For the above reasons, applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please contact the signee.

Respectfully submitted,

Aka Chan LLP

/Melvin D. Chan/

Melvin D. Chan
Reg. No. 39,626

Aka Chan LLP
900 Lafayette Street, Suite 710
Santa Clara, CA 95050
Tel: (408) 701-0035
Fax: (408) 608-1599
E-mail: mel@akachanlaw.com